

# THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A MENTORING PROGRAM FOR PARA SPORT COACHES

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## WHAT WE DID

- Partnering with a provincial coaching association in Canada, we explored the experiences and perceptions of 15 mentor and 29 mentee coaches who participated in a formal virtual Para sport coach mentorship program.
- We gathered data through focus groups and individual interviews with mentor and mentee coaches, then analyzed the data to identify themes.

## WHAT WE FOUND

- How the virtual mentoring relationship was developed:
  - Mentors and mentees decided on meeting frequency, length, and communication method using virtual platforms or phone calls.
  - Being able to see one another (through video calls) was important for building connections between mentors and mentees.
- The learning outcomes that mentees developed:
  - Mentors helped mentees stay motivated and keep a positive attitude during COVID-19.
  - Because mentees felt unsure or unprepared to coach athletes with disabilities, mentor coaches focused on enhancing mentee's Para sport coaching efficacy.
- Perceptions of the program, including recommendations, advice, and remarks:
  - Participants reported high levels of positivity and interest in continuing the program.
  - Both mentors and mentees valued the program for personal and professional growth and advocated for its continuation.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Formal mentorship programs for Para sport coaches can operate effectively in a virtual environment, **fostering motivation, learning, and positive coach development.**
- While no longer necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic, offering a virtual component for coach mentorship programs enhances **accessibility** for program participants.
- Virtual coach mentorship programs should emphasize regular touchpoints between mentor and mentee coaches with opportunities for 'face-to-face' connection through video calls.

